

Supplemental Food Program, and it distributes 23,000 food boxes monthly countywide to low-income seniors 60 and older. It operates a community donated food bank with enrollment of over 350 local charities that make food available to those that are at the risk of hunger. This vulnerable population includes the disabled, seniors, families with children, veterans—I see veterans in those lines coming to pick up boxes of food—the unemployed and the homeless.

The foods department operates the SNAP program, and this program has increased enrollment to over 400,000 qualified individuals in Orange County, California, who are at the risk of hunger.

Mr. Speaker, we are a great country, and we have great Americans—those who have served in our military, those who have served in public service, those who teach our children, those who nurse us when we are sick, those who build our roads, invent new gadgets for us to communicate. We are a great country of innovation. We are a great country of beauty from sea to shining sea. And yet, in this great country of ours, in today's day, there are over 46 million Americans living in poverty, many of them going to sleep tonight hungry, hungry, hungry. As the Congress, as the conscience of America, as the people's House, we need to work together to eliminate poverty in America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE PEOPLE'S NIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing us to engage in what we call People's Night 2. The House has been working diligently for the citizens of our districts. We have passed solid legislation that is good for the economy, that protects life, that helps small businesses, veterans, bills that reduce taxes. I would guess that maybe not all of our citizens are even aware that the House has actually passed a balanced budget. In fact, there are over 300 pieces of legislation that have been passed through the House but have been stalled in the Senate.

Tonight, we want to highlight some of the legislation, but also, and with all due respect, we are calling on Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL to get moving on these bills. I am joined by several colleagues this evening to share why we believe it is time to move on behalf of the American people.

Our first Member, colleague and friend, from Pennsylvania, Mr. RYAN COSTELLO. Mr. COSTELLO is a freshman, along with myself, our shortstop on the baseball team, and a strong voice speaking out on those who sometimes

cannot speak for themselves, and that is our veterans. We promise that we would go to Congress and work hard for the men and women who depend on us to get the Veterans Administration correct.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO).

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from North Carolina for yielding. Mr. WALKER has really been a leader in no time on so many issues. It is nice to be his hall mate and also his teammate on the baseball field, and I appreciate him putting together this Special Order to raise a number of issues that we have gotten through the House here and that we are respectfully calling upon the Senate to take up.

I am here to speak about the crying need for change and increased accountability at the Department of Veterans Affairs that can be facilitated by the immediate passage of H.R. 1994, the VA Accountability Act of 2015. This is a bill that myself and many others have cosponsored under the leadership of Chairman JEFF MILLER, and it is a bill that I am requesting that the Senate take up and pass with bipartisan support here in the House in July.

It gives the Secretary of the VA the additional tools he needs to accelerate the badly-needed culture change at the Department of Veterans Affairs. It gives the Secretary of the VA what he needs to rebuild the trust between the VA and this Congress, taxpayers, and, most importantly, the veterans of this country.

H.R. 1994 includes many provisions to fix the broken personnel system at the Department. But, most importantly, this bill authorizes the Secretary to remove or demote any employee for poor performance or misconduct while also increasing protections for whistleblowers who have been, and continue to be, very important in the oversight role of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Many of you know the Philadelphia Regional Office has seen scandal after scandal. It has experienced a gross lapse in management, mishandling of claims, the administration of improper payments, and fabricated data. On top of that, the hostile work environment and whistleblower retaliation occurred on a nearly daily basis.

This bill brings accountability to the managers at the Philly VA responsible for these actions, as well as those across the country in the VA, who have acted improperly.

I believe a majority of VA's employees—as we all do here in Congress—this is an important point to make—most people that work at the VA are hard-working public servants who are dedicated to providing quality health care and timely benefits for veterans.

□ 2000

I am sure the majority of these employees are just as frustrated in that most of us see that the VA problem

employees continue to be moved to new positions as opposed to being removed from the payroll. We have seen time and again how poor performance can spread like a cancer through a workforce and how the presence of bad employees only leads to poor customer service and is an impediment to the quality of service our veterans have earned.

Our veterans deserve nothing less than the highest quality of care, and it is our job as Members of Congress to do everything in our power to ensure that their care is placed before the interests of entrenched bureaucrats and poor performance. If we want what is best for our veterans, then the status quo at the VA is not acceptable. It is not working. It is failing the mission of the Department, and it is failing the veterans the VA is supposed to serve.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not give the Secretary the tools that he or she needs to hold VA employees accountable, then we are just as culpable for any future VA failures. The antiquated civil service laws that have fostered the VA's cultural mess need to go. That is what the VA Accountability Act does. That is why we are calling on the Senate to take it up.

After the largest scandal in VA's history—and, in my home State, the continued problems at the Philadelphia VA—the VA has only successfully fired three employees for wait time manipulation even though over 100 hospitals have been identified as having gamed the appointment system. That is simply unacceptable. H.R. 1994 would give the Secretary the tools he needs to hold more employees accountable faster than can be done now under existing civil service rules.

As Mr. WALKER will continue to do this evening in pointing out a number of bills that have been ushered through the House—reform bills that improve the welfare of this country and that reform various bureaucracies—H.R. 1994 does just that. I urge the Senate to take action and push for accountability just as we have done here in the House on behalf of this country's veterans.

I thank the gentleman for organizing this Special Order tonight.

Mr. WALKER. I thank Representative COSTELLO. His hard work on the Veterans' Affairs Committee is duly noted.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, these bills are not making it to the President's desk. We are tired of the argument that the President will most likely veto these legislative bills or of the filibustering that we hear about sometimes in the Senate. We hear the word "reconciliation" a great deal. Reconciliation is a simple majority vote. Fifty-one votes in the Senate is what is needed to get it to the President's desk under reconciliation.

If we think back, this is how HARRY REID shoved ObamaCare into the culture and fabric of the American people—by reconciliation, by a simple majority. In fact, it has been Mr. REID

who has blocked, filibustered, and sat on legislation to protect the President. That is why the American people elected Republican majorities in the House and the Senate. It was to clean up Washington and to stand against President Obama's far-left agenda.

One of the ladies I have been able to meet who has worked hard and who has been a voice is a nurse, a small-business woman, and a former educator. I specifically like the nurse part, being married to one for 23 years. She is the middle daughter of working class, Great Depression-era parents. Having had 40 years of experience in working in the healthcare field, she is uniquely positioned as a credible and effective leader on healthcare policy in Congress. She is a strong leader on fiscal and budget reforms, but her voice for life in these halls is one that is heard throughout the country.

From Tennessee's Sixth District, Congresswoman DIANE BLACK is that voice, and I would like for her to share a little bit more on her specific piece of legislation.

Mrs. BLACK. I thank the gentleman from North Carolina, my good friend, Congressman WALKER, for bringing us together for this very important conversation.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of Americans worked very hard to deliver these historic majorities to Congress, but, today, there is a feeling that the more things change, the more they stay the same. We billed this as the "New American Congress." Yet, like last year and the year before and the year before that, too many House-passed bills remain trapped in the U.S. Senate.

The House passed the REINS Act in July, which would prevent the Obama administration from legislating in the form of government rule and would give Congress the final say over the major Federal regulations just like our Founding Fathers intended. But where is it today? Nearly 4 months later, it continues to languish in the upper Chamber, awaiting for a chance for debate.

More recently, the House passed the Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act, requiring Iran to make good on its \$43 billion of delinquent payments to the victims of its state-sponsored terrorism. Once again, this good and decent bill is collecting dust in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the challenges that our Senate leadership faces. The do-nothing Senate majority of the last Congress is now the do-nothing Senate minority of this Congress. They are filibustering countless House-passed bills and bringing the wheels of government to a grinding halt, but we cannot let that stop us from bringing up these bills for full debate in the light of day and putting our priorities in front of the American people.

While we are at it, it is time to change the rules of engagement in the upper Chamber. In a body of 100 people, a majority is 51. It really is that sim-

ple. The cloture rule is nowhere to be found in the U.S. Constitution. It is an antiquated Senate rule that is not effectively serving the institution today. I call on the Senate leaders to turn the page and break the logjam so that we can put the American people's priorities on the President's desk.

I don't doubt that the President will veto many of these measures. For goodness sake, he vetoed a bill to fund our troops, so I put nothing past him. Let's put him on record. Let's ensure that President Obama is required to accept or to reject our ideas and to defend that decision to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is this: The American people delivered us this majority, and they expect us to use it.

Again, I thank my colleague from North Carolina.

Mr. WALKER. I thank Representative BLACK and appreciate her heartfelt words.

Mr. Speaker, in nearly a year of holding the majority, the President has only vetoed three of our bills. In fact, only once, I believe, he has had to do that in the last 8 months.

Politico, back in February, published this prediction: "Though Obama's three vetoes are thus far a record low...experts expect Obama's final 2 years to be packed with high-profile veto showdowns."

That hasn't happened.

My next friend and colleague who would like to share a little bit of his heart is someone I have grown to admire and respect. I am privileged to serve with him on the Homeland Security Committee where just a few months ago, I heard one of the more powerful 5- or 6-minute talks that I have heard since I have been here in Congress in which he was willing to stand up for the Family Research Council and Tony Perkins against the tax from the Southern Poverty Law Center—specifically the President—who had put them on a hate list.

In fact, I am going to yield him a little bit of leeway so he may share some things that may be a little bit in context but that may be a little bit off as well. It is my privilege to introduce and to hear from a great Congressman from South Carolina, Representative JEFF DUNCAN.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman. I thank him for having this People's Night 2, so as to take the opportunity to speak to the American people about, really, what have become a lot of frustrations since they elected a Republican House and a Republican Senate.

In fact, I did a tele-townhall last night, and a number of comments and questions that I had was: Why can't you guys get more bills to the President's desk? I had to explain that there is a 60-vote filibuster, the modern filibuster—a 60-vote threshold—over in the Senate. I had to explain what a modern filibuster rule is in the Senate.

A Senator from the great State of South Carolina actually filibustered on

the floor. He spoke for 48 hours without stopping, without sitting down. He held the floor of the Senate to make a point for 48 hours. That is the traditional filibuster that you hear about. Today, in the 21st century, when we hear that a Senator has filed a filibuster and that there is a 60-vote threshold to get over, what that means is a Senator has just put his name on a bill, and he doesn't have to go down and utter a single word, and he doesn't have to stand on the floor for a single minute. In fact, he can go to Charlie Palmer's and have a steak and call it a "filibuster." America, this is wrong.

I had a conversation with some Senate staff today because I think they ought to change their Senate rules.

They said: Well, the Senator—and he is a Senator I respect a lot—disagrees with your position. They pointed out that the Senate filibuster rule, the 60-vote threshold, has helped Republicans in the past to stop bad legislation. They said it stopped amnesty.

I said: Well, hold on right there. Amnesty, actually, passed. The Gang of Eight bill passed, and we failed to bring it up in the House. We stopped it on the House side.

They said: Well, it stopped gun control and a lot of other things.

I said: Yes, but it is keeping right now a lot of good things from making it to the President's desk.

America gave us this majority, and they really expect us to pass bills out that reflect the Republican principles, morals, values, and convictions of the electorate that sent us here and gave us this majority. They expect us to pass bills out of the Congress and to send them to the President's desk. Then the President can do whatever he wants with those bills, but I think, if he vetoes them, then America will see the dichotomy between the Republican governance and a Democrat President.

Now the Senate rules. They are not in this book. This is the United States Constitution. It is a pocket copy that I carry with me. You can't find the Senate rules in this. It does say that both bodies—the House and the Senate—make their own rules to govern what goes on here, but they are not spelled out in this document. It is time for MITCH MCCONNELL and the Republicans over in the Senate to actually have a "come to Jesus" meeting and really talk about what is stifling the Republican work when the Republican electorate in this country has given us the majority and expects us to do the work.

I want to shift gears for just a minute because this is the People's Night, and I want to talk about something that is on the minds of the American people—the safety and security of our Nation and the national security issues in the wake of the Paris attacks, in the wake of the Lebanon bombing, in the wake of a lot of things that we are seeing with stabbings and other things that are going on by ISIS, primarily, but you can throw Boko Haram

and some others who are committing acts of terror into the mix as well. Americans are concerned about the safety and security of our Nation.

I chair the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Just this afternoon, it was revealed that the Honduran police stopped five Syrians who were carrying falsified Greek passports, and they had flown all over Latin America before they had gotten to Honduras. They were headed north to the Guatemalan border. If they were headed north to the Guatemalan border, it tells me they were going to take advantage of our porous southern border, like many others have, to enter into this country. We don't know why. What we do know is five Syrians traveled to Honduras on fake Greek passports, and they were apprehended by the police.

People are criticizing the Republicans for wanting to hit "pause" on the Syrian refugee program, and they are saying, "You don't have compassion." Let me tell you that you don't lock the door because you hate the people on the outside. You lock the door because you love the people on the inside.

We have to protect America. That is what we are charged to do. When we raise our hands and swear an oath to the Constitution—to uphold it and to defend this great country—we are charged as Members of Congress to protect this great Nation, first and foremost.

I thank the gentleman for some leniency. I will continue to speak on behalf of the American people. It is time for MITCH to get moving on some bills that are Republican bills over in the Senate.

□ 2015

Mr. WALKER. Historically, I would like to put this inaction in some kind of perspective. We actually have to go back to James Garfield in the 1800s to find such a low number of vetoes. James Garfield only served 7 months, or about 200 days. President Obama has been in office nearly 7 years. Compared to other Presidents—for example, President Kennedy, though obviously never completing his term, however—he used a total of veto 21 times. Ronald Reagan used a total of 78.

Why is this so important? Well, the answer is simple. This is not political theater. It is the process that exposes the President's continued desire to rely on government and not the private sector, which may explain the national debt skyrocketing from \$10 trillion to nearly \$20 trillion that is predicted by the end of his term next year. We need to end covering for the President or for other Members on these tough votes.

When the President vetoes legislation, he has the obligation to explain to the country the reasons that he is against such bills that help the American worker and protect families and small businesses. It is one of the only measures that our Founding Fathers provided to Congress in holding the President accountable.

It is a privilege to introduce a friend from Georgia's 10th Congressional District, a fellow freshman who is passionate about the cause of the American people, someone that is authentic, someone who founded the Cultures and Values Network and was the host of his own radio talk program. He has become a dear and close friend of mine. I would like for the American people to hear from Representative JODY HICE from Georgia's 10th Congressional District.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for hosting this People's Night for this Special Order. I appreciate all that you do, and I appreciate your leadership and your friendship. It is good to have another minister on the grounds. I am honored to serve with you.

Like has already been discussed by so many tonight, I likewise experience a great deal of frustration. I have had conversations, as have others here, with individuals in the Senate frustrated over that 60-vote threshold to even debate an issue over there.

Like others, I have been told that they have protected our country from so many other horrible pieces of legislation or that, ultimately, it is irrelevant because the bill would probably be vetoed anyway. There are excuses after excuses.

The fact of the matter is that the American people sent us here to do a job, to represent them to the best of our ability. I am honored to be here with my colleagues here tonight.

I am proud of the fact that, over the 10 months or so that I have been here, we have passed probably hundreds of bills, meaningful legislation, legislation that would protect the American people, legislation that would strengthen our national security, that would care for veterans and provide the kind of care that they deserve, legislation that would empower American businesses and small businesses, legislation that would increase transparency and accountability within government agencies.

For example, in order to protect the American citizens, as we all are so concerned about these days, we passed H.R. 3009, the Sanctuary Cities Act, that would not allow any State or local government to continue to receive funding if they harbor illegal alien criminals. Cities like San Francisco and many others would no longer be able to have a government-bankrolled sanctuary to provide such a thing for illegal alien lawbreakers.

In addition, as the Representative from South Carolina just referred to moments ago, the threat of ISIS and the authentic threat against the West from terror attacks is real. We are living with that reality today.

So we passed in this body H.R. 237, which would provide the Secretary of State with the authority to revoke or deny passports to individuals who are aligned with foreign terrorist groups.

It would also provide critical assistance to law enforcement and intelligence service personnel to make it easier for them to flag suspects when they are traveling internationally.

Perhaps most importantly, that bill would help prevent turned Americans who are now fighting alongside of ISIS from coming back to the United States undetected. Again, these bills and many others like these have not even received a hearing on the other side of the Capitol.

This body has passed the VA Accountability Act, which would allow the Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary new authority to fire bad employees in order to assure that our veterans are receiving the care that they deserve.

Additionally, this body has passed the Death Tax Repeal Act, which would eliminate a tax which is unfairly imposed on family estates after a loved one has passed. That bill would ensure that farmers and small-business owners would not be taxed for the success of their loved one who has passed away. It would help keep small businesses and farm doors open.

This body has passed multiple pieces of legislation that would increase government transparency and accountability, which our constituents deserve. To that end, we have passed the IRS Email Transparency Act. We also passed the Prevent Targeting at the IRS Act. The list goes on and on and on, is my point.

I am proud to stand here tonight. I am proud to state that we, this entire body, have successfully passed real and meaningful legislation that would vastly improve the lives of our constituents and our Nation.

However, the reality is that, without a fully engaged and willing partner on the other side of the Capitol, all this work that we have done equates to nothing more than a vacant parking lot. It amounts to a wicked limbo of immobility or lethargic stasis. Quite frankly, the American people deserve more than this.

I urge our friends on the other side of the Capitol to start taking up some of the legislation that this body has passed and to do so with a sense of urgency.

I realize that they are described as the most deliberative body in the world, but, frankly, it feels as though they are helping create an environment of absolute dysfunction.

I encourage them to take up bills and to move them forward so that, working together, we can become the most decisive body in the world.

The clock is ticking. The American people are excellent timekeepers.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative HICE for those passionate comments.

You know, in life, sometimes you run across people who are authentic, who truly have a servant spirit. One of those people I have been privileged to meet is right here in the Halls of Congress.

He is a Representative from Arizona's Eighth Congressional District. He is a Reagan conservative in his seventh term. He has one of the most powerful and passionate voices, a huge heart, but a strong voice for life. It is a privilege for him to be a part of our People's Night 2.

I yield to my friend, my colleague, and the great Representative from Arizona, Representative TRENT FRANKS.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, if I could, let me express sincere gratitude to Congressman WALKER for leading this effort tonight.

The people of North Carolina did a very wise thing to send this man to Congress. He has represented them faithfully. He is a Valley Forge American that I wish there were more of in the United States Congress.

Madam Speaker, the direction of America and the world under the leadership of Barack Obama is alarming to any reasonable observer. To those outside the beltway, Republicans seem weak and unwilling to effectively respond.

One of the hidden-in-plain-sight reasons for this false perception is the rules and present practices in the United States Senate controlling the parliamentarian instrument of the "motion to proceed to consider." This is the mechanism that allows the filibuster in the United States Senate.

Mr. Speaker, just very briefly, it takes 60 votes to allow a bill to come to the floor for debate in the United States Senate. It takes another vote of 60 votes to allow that bill to be actually voted upon.

The truth is that, with 54 Republicans, it takes 6 Democrats to help allow either debate or a vote to occur in the United States Senate.

Unfortunately, regardless of the nature of the bills, in recent years, this simply has not been allowed to occur. Mr. Speaker, this has become a boot on the throat of the Constitution and a stalemate to this Republic.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that, if we don't change it, the people of this country are going to become so wearied of this process, so convinced that we will remain in gridlock forever, that they will simply wash their hands of the American Government. If they do that, then the Founding Fathers' dream itself could die in this generation. It must not be allowed to happen.

To put this in practical terms, Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives passed some months ago the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill. The only thing that we did, using our article I powers of the purse, was to say that we would not fund the President's illegal, unconstitutional executive order on immigration.

That bill then went over to the Senate, fully funding the Department of Homeland Security. Democrats in the Senate said: No. We are not voting on the bill. You guys are shutting the government down.

Democrats want very much to shut this government down because they

know that the left-wing media will make sure that Republicans are fully blamed for that reality. That is what they want. It is not a deterrent to them. It is an inducement.

Mr. Speaker, the choice for House leadership is either to dumb the bill down so the Democrats will support it and thereby completely make the Republican base heartbroken or allow the government to be shut down. No one is accountable under this scenario, and it has to change, Mr. Speaker.

For my Republican friends that say, well, what if we are in the minority, well, we have been in the minority and ObamaCare passed and all of these other things passed because, unfortunately, the willingness of the Senate Democrats today to abuse this filibuster is so prevalent that it stops anything of consequence that matters to this country. Mr. Speaker, that has to change.

Under the current rules and practices, the balance between the reasonable opportunity to deliberate or debate and the ability to actually make a timely decision in the U.S. Senate no longer exists. The technical remedy to fix this is to adopt a change in the rules that will satisfy both the majority and the minority, prevent gridlock, and allow for consensus and the spirit of bipartisanship to return.

Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, I will be introducing a resolution calling upon the Senate to adjust their rules to prevent this mindless stalemate and the practice of the current rules as written.

The goal, Mr. Speaker, is not to do away with the Senate filibuster, but to maintain the ability of the minority to have leveraged objection to either majority overreach or deeply contested legislation while restoring the accountability and deliberation to what is called the world's most deliberative body.

Mr. Speaker, I have one last example. Almost 2 months ago this House passed the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. We have passed many bills that have never gotten to see the light of day in the Senate because of the Senate filibuster.

The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act required that babies surviving an abortion be given the same treatment and care that would be given to any child born naturally premature at the same age.

□ 2030

This bill now languishes in the Senate. It is uncertain if it will even be allowed a fair and honest debate up or down. These are born-alive children, Mr. Speaker—born alive—and no one can obscure the humanity and personhood of born-alive babies or claim that there is a conflict that exists between now separate interests of the mother and the child. Nor can they take refuge within the schizophrenic paradox *Roe v. Wade* has subjected this country to for now more than four decades.

Mr. Speaker, protecting born-alive survivors of abortion is not a Republican issue. It is not a Democratic issue. It is a test of our basic humanity and who we are as a human family. Before my colleagues in the Senate vote against this bill or, far worse, do as they have done so often and use the Senate rules to filibuster and avoid a vote and to deprive this bill of an honest debate and a fair vote, I would implore each one of them to ask themselves two questions in the stillness of their own heart.

First, is turning our backs on the most helpless of our born-alive children truly who the United States of America has become? Second, is voting against or filibustering against a bill to protect born-alive human babies from agonizing dismemberment and death who they have become as a Senate and what they want to be remembered for?

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we recognize that there are certain bills that are worth a vote, bills like protecting this country from a potential Iranian nuclear option and bills like protecting this country from allowing its little born-alive children to be killed indiscriminately. Mr. Speaker, that time has come.

I thank the gentleman for his kindness.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Representative FRANKS. I think America just saw some of the eloquence as well as the passion with which you speak for America's unborn.

As we have talked tonight about the many pieces of legislation that the House has worked on diligently over the last 10, 11 months, here is just a partial list that I hold in my hands: legislation that is good for the American family, a balanced budget, reduction of taxes, taking care of our veterans. Tonight, with all due respect, we are calling upon MITCH MCCONNELL and the Senate to move, to move diligently and to move urgently. It is past time.

Tonight before my closing comments, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania's 12th District, Representative KEITH ROTHFUS. It is maybe just a bit off topic, but something that is very important about what has been going on over the last week.

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Mr. ROTHFUS. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership in organizing this Special Order. I thank him for allowing me to take a few moments to again take a look at what has been going on across the world and the troubling news that we have from abroad.

I rise tonight, Mr. Speaker, to call for a moratorium on the entry of refugees into the United States from Syria and all other countries that have been infiltrated by ISIS and other terrorist groups until security concerns can be adequately addressed.

In the wake of the recent attacks in Paris, in Beirut, and on a Russian plane flying over the Sinai, my first

and foremost concern is for the safety and security of my constituents in western Pennsylvania.

To put it simply, the safety and security of the American people are non-negotiable. Right now we simply do not have the mechanisms in place to ensure that the 10,000 Syrian refugees that the President would have come into this country over the next year and other refugees from terrorist-controlled areas are properly vetted.

FBI Director James Comey has said as much: "If someone has never made a ripple in the pond in Syria in a way that would get their identity or their interest reflected in our database, we can query our database until the cows come home, but there will be nothing show up because we have no record of them."

The Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Homeland Security have said the same. It is both reasonable and prudent to insist that we know exactly who these individuals are before they settle into our towns and cities.

Currently, we have neither the capability nor the capacity to do this. The recent attacks have awakened us to the reality that Islamic State terrorists have the worst of intentions not only for Christians and other religious minorities in their own region, but for the entire Western world. They are not, as the President has claimed, merely a setback. They are acts of war by a terrorist scourge against decency and humanity and freedom and everything that we as Americans stand for.

It comes as no surprise, then, that ISIS has already stated it intends to attack the heart of the United States here in Washington, D.C., and it is not impossible that ISIS terrorists could enter the country by posing as Syrian refugees. In fact, reports indicate that a Syrian passport was found next to the body of 25-year-old Ahmad al-Mohammad, one of the suicide bombers in Paris. He was born in Idlib, a city in northwest Syria, and the Paris prosecutor's office said his fingerprints matched those of a person who traveled through Greece last month.

So the security concerns that the American people are raising are not, as the President and others have suggested, without merit. They are completely legitimate, especially as the number of refugees is set to increase to 85,000 in 2016 and 100,000 in 2017, a significant increase from the average 70,000 per year over the past several years.

The truth is that the American people are an incredibly compassionate and generous people. We have a rich history of assisting people in other nations around the globe when they are suffering from a humanitarian crisis, poverty, oppression, or war. Since September 11, 2001, the United States has resettled 748,000 refugees from around the world. The American people have also assisted innocent Syrian refugees fleeing from violence in search of a bet-

ter life, providing \$4.5 billion in humanitarian aid since the start of the crisis in Syria to help them relocate in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, and other nations.

While we desire to assist those who need help around the globe, we have a solemn duty to protect our citizens. The bottom line is we need to put the safety and security of Americans first. The solution I am proposing today is indefinite, but not necessarily permanent. It is the only responsible thing to do under these circumstances.

We need time to review and implement policies that will ensure that those who seek refuge in the United States are properly vetted.

I also urge my colleagues in the Senate to act boldly and promptly to ensure the security concerns of the American people are addressed.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Representative ROTHFUS.

Our second People's Night was scheduled weeks ago before the terrorists struck Paris.

I believe it is appropriate this evening to send out our sincerest thoughts and prayers to the Parisian families and others whose lives have been changed forever by these cowardly attacks. Though my heart is heavy, my discontentment with this administration has reached a new level of frustration.

Last year President Obama stated that ISIS was not a serious threat. In fact, many of us remember him referring to them as the JV squad. Just hours before this barbaric attack, the President emphatically expressed that ISIS had been contained and they were no longer expanding.

As a member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I couldn't disagree more. According to the FBI, there are more than 1,000 open investigations that are ISIS or terrorist related. ISIS is a clear and present danger to the American people.

Earlier today, in a joint hearing with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Homeland Security, General Jack Keane shared these words:

ISIS is the most successful terrorist organization of our time. The world does not believe that our country is serious about taking on ISIS.

The general added:

ISIS is not contained, and they are at war with us, but we are not at war with them.

While President Obama plays down the threat, other world leaders are leading and exhibiting and showing strength. Even the Pope has been warning us that these attacks and others could be the beginning of world war III.

After reviewing the evidence and testimony, I am convinced that it is only by the grace of God and the diligent work of our local, State, and national law enforcement that we haven't been hurt in the same manner that played out just last weekend in Paris. Sadly, President Obama has yet to offer any plan, any strategy, or any solution to slow down these sons from hell.

There is more evidence, continuing evidence of the disastrous Obama doctrine. The words of the President this past weekend sounded more like a spokesperson for the United Nations than America's Commander in Chief.

This is more of the same flawed foreign policy that we have experienced, just like we did in the recent Iran deal. May I remind us that 25 Democrats stood with Republicans, rebuking such a deal. Even more are calling on the President to speak with clarity and with boldness. The American people have grown weary of the constant swag and condescending responses.

Mr. Speaker, how much longer can we afford to wait on a President who stubbornly refuses to identify these devils as radical Islamist extremists? I would hope and pray that all Members of this House would band together, demanding the President deliver a definitive course of action. It is time, Mr. Speaker, for the President to settle up.

I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4038, AMERICAN SECURITY AGAINST FOREIGN ENEMIES ACT OF 2015

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (during the Special Order of Mr. WALKER), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-342) on the resolution (H. Res. 531) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4038) to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be completed prior to the admission of certain aliens as refugees, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ISIS CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) for 30 minutes.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, Will and Ariel Durant, perhaps the most renowned recorders of the history of mankind, wrote shortly after their landmark 40-year multivolume work was completed:

"Civilization is not inherited; it has to be learned and earned by each generation anew; if the transmission should be interrupted . . . civilization would die, and we should be savages again."

It is a warning we must heed. For all of our advancement in self-governance, the rule of law, and the betterment of people's lives, the world stands in crisis. Our actions toward evil, twisted brands of militant Islamic jihadism in the coming months will determine how humanity navigates the coming century. As Will Durant correctly predicts, we must either prevent the death of civilized life or become savages again.